



## NASA PIV smartcards at Headquarters Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

November, 2013

This list of FAQs is a subset of a larger list derived by the Agency. This list is tailored to meet the needs of users at Headquarters. If you do not find the answer to your question here, see the [Agency Smartcard FAQs](#). However, please know that not all information in the Agency document will apply to users at HQ.

### Contents

What is a NASA PIV smartcard?.....	2
What is required for a NASA PIV smartcard login? .....	2
Is the smartcard login replacing the DAR login (Symantec PGP)?.....	3
Does my NASA PIV smartcard expire? .....	3
How do I renew my public key certificates? .....	3
What is a NASA PIV smartcard reader?.....	3
Which direction do I insert my smartcard? .....	3
What is a NASA PIV smartcard PIN? .....	3
Am I required to use my NASA PIV smartcard for logins? .....	3
What is the HQ PIV Smartcard Early Adoption program?.....	4
What are the benefits of the HQ NASA PIV smartcard login? .....	4
Must I be connected to the network for a smartcard login?.....	4
How do I use my NASA PIV smartcard to log in to my computer? .....	5
What if smartcard isn't offered as an authentication method? .....	5
After logging in with my smartcard, should I remove it?.....	5
How do I get rid of the blue window reminding me to remove my smartcard? .....	6
I disabled the smartcard reminder window. How do I enable it again?.....	6
Can I configure my computer screen to lock upon smartcard removal? .....	6
Can I use my smartcard with my Macintosh computer?.....	6
Will working remotely affect NASA PIV smartcard logins? .....	6
Why do smartcard logins take longer when teleworking?.....	6
Why do I get a certificate error when trying to connect to VPN? .....	7
Why do I lose my VPN connection when I remove my smartcard?.....	7
What if I am on telework/travel and without my NASA PIV smartcard? .....	7
What if I forget to bring my NASA PIV smartcard to work?.....	7
What if I forgot my smartcard and my NDC password? .....	8
What if my NASA PIV smartcard is damaged, lost or stolen?.....	8
What are the PIN requirements? .....	8
Does my PIN expire? .....	9
What if I forget my PIN? .....	9

# NASA PIV smartcards at Headquarters

How many incorrect PIN attempts before I am locked out? .....	9
How do I reset my PIN? .....	9
Does this mean I no longer need my NDC password? .....	9
Are the steps for changing my NDC password affected? .....	10
Does this mean I no longer need my RSA token? .....	10
What about go-to workstations? .....	10
How can I be temporarily removed from the smartcard-only login program? .....	10
How do I “opt-out” of the PIV smartcard-only login program? .....	10
Can I still telework using my home computer? .....	10
I can’t access certain applications using VPN. ....	11
Are loaner laptops part of the early adoption program? .....	11
Why am I receiving an error message about drivers? .....	11
Why am I receiving an error that says the context was acquired as silent? .....	11
What if a technician must access my computer? .....	11

## What is a NASA PIV smartcard?

The Agency is moving toward the use of Personal Identity Verification (PIV) smartcards for authentication to NASA systems. The PIV smartcard (aka “NASA badge”) contains printed and electronic information that is used to verify your identity. The transition to using the PIV smartcard for computer login will provide another level of security for mission-critical data at NASA. Most NASA workers have a NASA PIV smartcard as their “badge.” Some of the features include:

- A visible “badge” face with photo and other identification information
- A gold contact surface for interface with contact-type smartcard readers
- A radio for non-contact (i.e. “swipe”) interface with physical access controls such as door locks and turnstiles
- Stored biometric information such as fingerprints which can verify the identity of the card owner
- Stored public key certificates that enable strong authentication and encryption

## What is required for a NASA PIV smartcard login?

To perform a NASA PIV smartcard login, you must have the following:

- ACES-provided Windows 7 computer
- ActivIdentity ActivClient software, which allows your NASA PIV smartcard to be read and used by your computer. All ACES computer seats come with this loaded.
- Working [NASA PIV smartcard reader](#)
- [NASA PIV smartcard](#) (your badge)
- [NASA PIV smartcard PIN](#)

### Is the smartcard login replacing the DAR login (Symantec PGP)?

Your PIV smartcard login is replacing your NDC login. You will still be required to “unlock” to your computer using Symantec PGP.

### Does my NASA PIV smartcard expire?

Your PIV smartcard lasts for 5 years. When your PIV smartcard nears expiration, you will be contacted by your Center Security Office to make an appointment to enroll for a new PIV smartcard.

The public key certificates that reside on your PIV smartcard must be renewed every 3 years to ensure their security. This means that they must be renewed once for the life of your PIV smartcard, because after 5 years you will receive a new smartcard with new certificates. If they are not renewed, your PIV smartcard will not be usable for computer login or to access NASA facilities with newer technology physical controls (e.g., door locks and turnstiles). Technically, your PIV smartcard is not valid without valid certificates stored on it, even though the date printed on the face of the “badge” has not expired.

### How do I renew my public key certificates?

You can renew your certificates on your Windows computer or on another Windows computer that you can log into. If you regularly login to a Windows computer with a PIV smartcard, you will be prompted to update your smartcard. Concur with the update, and allow it to complete; it will take a few minutes.

If you want to force a check for an update, insert your PIV smartcard and follow these steps:

1. **Start | ActivIdentity | ActivClient | User Console**
2. **Tools | Advanced | Check for Card Update**
3. Locate the update for your smartcard and follow the prompts to complete the update

### What is a NASA PIV smartcard reader?

The NASA PIV smartcard reader may be a slot embedded into your keyboard, a slot within your laptop, or a separate external device connected to your computer. If you do not have a reader, or it is not functioning properly, contact the [Enterprise Service Desk \(ESD\)](#).

### Which direction do I insert my smartcard?

Insert your Smartcard, face up, with gold contact pad first.

### What is a NASA PIV smartcard PIN?

Your PIN is the six to eight-digit code you selected when you first received your NASA PIV smartcard. See also, [What if I forget my PIN?](#)

### Am I required to use my NASA PIV smartcard for logins?

All Windows users are encouraged to use their NASA PIV smartcard to login to their computer. However, at this time, only Windows users participating in the Smartcard Early Adoption Program are **required** to use their smartcard to login.

Under certain circumstances, some users will need to opt-out of using Smartcard-only at this time:

- Non-ACES issued workstation

## NASA PIV smartcards at Headquarters

- NASA-issued Macintosh workstation
- Personnel on permanent, remote telework
- HQ Virtual computer

### What is the HQ PIV Smartcard Early Adoption program?

The Agency is moving toward the use of the NASA PIV smartcard (the NASA “badge”) as the sole method of logging into NASA computers and providing authentication to systems, networks, and applications. This will improve NASA security because it provides two-factor authentication (the card and the PIN).

To comply with federal mandates, beginning July 2013, each NASA Center began implementing its own early adoption program of NASA PIV smartcard mandatory login on workstations running Microsoft Windows 7. The Agency will then begin incremental deployments. Follow-on initiatives will add Macintosh and other operating systems, and provide solutions for mobile devices and all remaining Enterprise Applications.

### What are the benefits of the HQ NASA PIV smartcard login?

The NASA PIV smartcard provides added security:

- Your PIV smartcard uniquely identifies you right down to your fingerprints
- Accessing systems, networks, and applications with the PIV smartcard is far more secure than with re-usable passwords
- PIV smartcard can be easily disabled if lost or stolen
- The PIV smartcard is interoperable with other Federal agencies

The NASA PIV smartcard is convenient:

- You never have to change your PIN (although you can if you want to)
- Once you login, most enterprise applications admit you without another login
- No multiple usernames and passwords (for compliant applications)
- Eventually, the PIV smartcard will replace the SecurID token as well
- Eventually, one card for turnstiles, doors, login, encryption, and signing

### Do all applications recognize my NASA PIV smartcard?

Today, several applications allow the use of your NASA PIV smartcard in place of a user ID and [NDC password](#). Going forward, a growing number of applications will support smartcard use. If you are prompted to enter a user ID and password, you can assume that the tool does not yet recognize the NASA PIV smartcard.

### Must I be connected to the network for a smartcard login?

No.

### How do I use my NASA PIV smartcard to log in to my computer?

1. Press **CTRL + ALT + DELETE**.
2. When the following warning appears, click **OK**.

Warning! This US Government computer is for authorized users only. By accessing this system you are consenting to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.
3. Insert your smartcard into the [NASA PIV smartcard reader](#).

The following message appears: **Reading NASA PIV smartcard...**
4. When your name and login credentials appear on the screen, enter your PIN | Either press **Enter**, or click the arrow to the right.

While your computer is logging you on, the word “Welcome” appears briefly along with a swirling circle indicating that the computer is still processing your PIN. After this, your desktop appears with a message that you may remove your NASA PIV smartcard and return it to your badge holder.
5. Click **OK**.

**NOTE:** First-time smartcard login: Windows always prompts you to log in the way you did the previous time. So the first time you log in with your smartcard, select **Switch User | Smartcard login**. On subsequent logins, it will become your new default login mode.

### What if smartcard isn't offered as an authentication method?

If you click Switch User and you still do not see smartcard listed as a login option, it may mean that the computer system is not recognizing your Smartcard reader. If the computer does not “see” a smartcard reader, it will not offer the smartcard login option.

If you have an external Smartcard reader that is connected to a USB port, make sure that it is plugged in securely.

If you are using a Smartcard reader for the first time, or if your computer operating system has been reloaded or restored, it is possible that the drivers for the Smartcard reader device are not installed or not configured properly.

If you are unable to resolve the issue, contact the [Enterprise Service Desk \(ESD\)](#).

### After logging in with my smartcard, should I remove it?

NASA would prefer that, after successful Smartcard login, you remove the card and put it back in your badge holder.

A blue reminder window reminds you to remove your badge every time you log in or unlock the screen with a smartcard. Click **OK** to dismiss the reminder.



### How do I get rid of the blue window reminding me to remove my smartcard?

Check the **Never show this message again** box, then click **OK**, and the reminder will no longer display on your computer.

### I disabled the smartcard reminder window. How do I enable it again?

1. Click **START** | **Run...**
2. At the **Open:** prompt, type “scpopupcfg” | Click **OK**.
3. You are presented with a window where you can configure your preference.

### Can I configure my computer screen to lock upon smartcard removal?

The default for computers at HQ is to “do nothing” on smartcard removal. This allows you to remove the smartcard and put it back in its badge holder, or to login to other computers simultaneously. For cases where there is a strong preference for the optional behavior of locking the screen on smartcard removal on a particular system, contact the Smartcard Support Team at [support@lists.nasa.gov](mailto:support@lists.nasa.gov) for assistance on getting the system configured for screen lock upon smartcard removal. Provide the user’s name and the Computer Name or asset tag number.

If this is a multi-user computer, make sure that all users agree with the configuration change, as it will take effect for all users of the computer.

### Can I use my smartcard with my Macintosh computer?

No. PIV smartcard login is not yet available for Macintosh computers.

### Will working remotely affect NASA PIV smartcard logins?

Prior to working remotely (e.g., using your NASA PIV smartcard to log in to your NASA computer while at home or on travel), you must first log in to your computer while connected to the NASA network, using your NASA PIV smartcard and PIN. This will ensure your credentials are cached for when the computer is not connected to the NASA network.

### Why do smartcard logins take longer when teleworking?

The expected time to log in to your NASA laptop in a mobile setting is up to 20 seconds, instead of the 8-10 second login when connected to the NASA network.

The reason for this delay is that the NASA PIV smartcard tries to validate the certificate before relying on the cached credential. This is a security feature and is an important component of the mobile computing environment.

### Why do I get a certificate error when trying to connect to VPN?

If you receive an error that the profile can't connect, modify the VPN profile to point to the correct certificate (the one on the smartcard). To do this, follow these steps:

1. On the Entrust Security Store Login screen, click **Cancel**
2. In the VPN window with the Nasahq-smartcard profile selected, click **Modify**
3. In the lower-left corner of the **VPN Client | Properties for "Nasahq-smartcard"** screen, under Certificate Authentication, select the other certificate from the menu | Click Save.
4. If you have more than two certificates listed, you may have to repeat this process and try the third one (there is no way to distinguish between the three other than they are numbered 0, 1, and 2).
5. When you've selected the correct certificate, the PIN entry dialog box appears. Enter your PIN.

### Why do I lose my VPN connection when I remove my smartcard?

For security purposes, HQ VPN was designed to disconnect when the smartcard is removed.

### What if I am on telework/travel and without my NASA PIV smartcard?

If you are on telework or travel, and you do not have your NASA PIV smartcard available (e.g. left at work, lost, damaged, or stolen), do the following:

If you...	Steps
Are an HQ early adopter of the NASA PIV smartcard-only login	You must temporarily have your computer configured so that you can log in using your NDC credentials. This is one reason why it is important to maintain your NDC password. Contact the <a href="#">Enterprise Service Desk (ESD)</a> .  <u>Note:</u> The temporary change-back process requires that your computer be physically connected to the NASA network and cannot be performed remotely.
Can log in with either your NDC credentials, or your NASA PIV smartcard	Log in using your NDC credentials. This is one reason why it is important to maintain your NDC password.

### What if I forget to bring my NASA PIV smartcard to work?

If you forget to bring your NASA PIV smartcard to the office, do the following:

If you...	Steps
Are an HQ early adopter of the NASA PIV smartcard-only login	You must temporarily have your computer configured so that you can log in using your NDC credentials. This is one reason why it is important to maintain your NDC password. Contact the <a href="#">Enterprise Service Desk (ESD)</a> .

## NASA PIV smartcards at Headquarters

	<u>Note:</u> The temporary change-back process requires that your computer be physically connected to the NASA network and cannot be performed remotely.
Can log in with either your NDC credentials, or your NASA PIV smartcard	Log in using your NDC credentials. This is one reason why it is important to maintain your NDC password.

### What if I forgot my smartcard and my NDC password?

If you forget to bring your NASA PIV smartcard to work and also can't remember your [NDC password](#), do the following:

If you...	Steps
Are an HQ early adopter of the NASA PIV smartcard-only login	Contact the <a href="#">Enterprise Service Desk (ESD)</a> . They will remove you from the early adoption program, and help you reset your NDC password.
Can log in with either your NDC credentials, or your NASA PIV smartcard	Contact the <a href="#">Enterprise Service Desk (ESD)</a> . They will help you reset your NDC password.

### What if my NASA PIV smartcard is damaged, lost or stolen?

If you...	Steps
Are an HQ early adopter of the NASA PIV smartcard-only login	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Immediately visit the NASA HQ Badging Office to initiate replacement of the damaged, lost, or stolen smartcard. They are located inside the HQ Security Office (Suite 1V63) in Room 1U66. The hours for walk-in customer service are Tuesday through Friday, 8:30-11:30 a.m.</li><li>2. Contact the <a href="#">Enterprise Service Desk (ESD)</a> to have your computer <a href="#">removed from the early adoption program</a>.</li><li>3. Until you receive your NASA PIV smartcard replacement, log in using your NDC credentials.</li></ol>
Can log in with either your NDC credentials, or your NASA PIV smartcard	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Immediately visit the NASA HQ Badging Office to initiate replacement of the damaged, lost, or stolen smartcard. They are located inside the HQ Security Office (Suite 1V63) in Room 1U66. The hours for walk-in customer service are Tuesday through Friday, 8:30-11:30 a.m.</li><li>2. Until you receive your NASA PIV smartcard replacement, log in using your NDC credentials.</li></ol>

### What are the PIN requirements?

Your NASA PIV smartcard PIN must conform to the following requirements:



## NASA PIV smartcards at Headquarters

- Must contain at least 6 characters
- Must not exceed 8 characters
- Must be different from current PIN
- Must contain only numerical characters
- Must be correctly confirmed

### Does my PIN expire?

Your NASA PIV smartcard PIN does not expire. However, you can [reset](#) it any time.

### What if I forget my PIN?

1. You can try your PIN 15 times before your smartcard is blocked, so try several PINs before proceeding to the next step.
2. If you still can't remember your PIN, choose a new one that conforms to the [PIN requirements](#).
3. Visit the NASA HQ Badging Office, located inside the HQ Security Office (Suite 1V63) in Room 1U66. The hours for walk-in customer service are Tuesday through Friday, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

### How many incorrect PIN attempts before I am locked out?

You can enter your PIN incorrectly 15 times before your NASA PIV smartcard is blocked. If your NASA PIV smartcard is blocked, you must either have your [PIN reset](#), or have the computer [removed from the NASA PIV smartcard-only login early adoption program](#).

### How do I reset my PIN?

To reset your PIN, you must know your current PIN. Follow these steps:

1. Choose a PIN that conforms to the [PIN requirements](#).
2. Insert your NASA PIV smartcard.
3. On the task bar at the bottom of your screen, look for the icon that resembles a NASA PIV smartcard reader.
4. Right-click on the icon and select PIN Change Tool.
5. Enter the required information to change your PIN.

### Does this mean I no longer need my NDC password?

Even if you use your NASA PIV smartcard for computer logins, you must still maintain your NDC password. You will continue to receive e-mail notifications every 60 days when it is about to expire, reminding you to change it.

### Are the steps for changing my NDC password affected?

There are a couple of added steps. To change your NDC password:

1. Press **Control + Alt + Delete**
2. Click **Change A Password...**
3. Click **Other Credentials** | Select **Smartcard**
4. Continue changing your NDC password as you normally do.

If you have problems, contact the [Enterprise Service Desk \(ESD\)](#). If you are a participant of the [PIV Smartcard Early Adoption Program](#), mention you are configured for smartcard-only login.

### Does this mean I no longer need my RSA token?

No. In the future, the NASA PIV smartcard will replace your SecurID token for most application logins. However, for now, you still need to maintain your token for various application logins including [Virtual Private Network \(VPN\)](#) and [Secure Nomadic Access \(SNA\)](#).

### What about go-to workstations?

Although the login on impacted computers requires NASA PIV smartcard use, you may log in to other NASA computers such as go-to workstations without your NASA PIV smartcard.

### How can I be temporarily removed from the smartcard-only login program?

Under certain circumstances, you can request to be temporarily removed from the NASA PIV smartcard-only program:

- If you will be going on travel and have concerns about using your NASA PIV smartcard
- If your NASA PIV smartcard is lost, stolen or damaged
- If you forget to bring your NASA PIV smartcard to work

In these situations, contact the [Enterprise Service Desk \(ESD\)](#).

### How do I “opt-out” of the PIV smartcard-only login program?

Opting out of the smartcard-only login program is available only in extenuating circumstances (such as permanent telework), and may be requested by contacting [Marion Meissner](#). All requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### Can I still telework using my home computer?

Yes.

### I can't access certain applications using VPN.

If you are using VPN with your Windows computer and have difficulty accessing certain applications, or are being prompted to provide a password for applications you don't normally have to, try the following: Press **Ctrl+Alt+Delete** | Click **Lock this computer** | Press **Ctrl+Alt+Delete** | Enter your PIN.

### Are loaner laptops part of the early adoption program?

Loaner laptops are not configured for the NASA PIV Smartcard Early Adoption program. If you use a loaner laptop, you will have to use your NDC credentials to login.

### Why am I receiving an error message about drivers?

If you receive an error that says, "The card supplied requires drivers that are not present on the system. Please try another card." This error is received when attempting to change your password after logging in with the Smartcard. To continue with changing your password, click **Other Credentials** and select your NDC Domain account.

### Why am I receiving an error that says the context was acquired as silent?

This error results from no PIN being entered at smartcard login. Often the **Caps Lock** or **Num Lock** key is in effect, and the PIN is not being recorded as you type it. Try again, and make sure that **Caps Lock** and **Num Lock** are off when your PIN is entered.

### What if a technician must access my computer?

If your computer is enabled for NASA PIV smartcard-only login, anyone who needs to access your computer will need a NASA PIV smartcard and NASA PIV smartcard PIN, including ACES technicians.

For assistance, contact the Enterprise Service Desk (ESD): Submit a ticket online at [esd.nasa.gov](https://esd.nasa.gov), or call 358-HELP (4357) or 1-866-4NASAHQ (462-7247).

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<http://itcd.hq.nasa.gov/faqs.html>